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Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council

DEPOSITORY

JUN 6 1992
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Lt. Governor Bob Kustra, Chairman
Timothy J. Hickmann, Executive Director

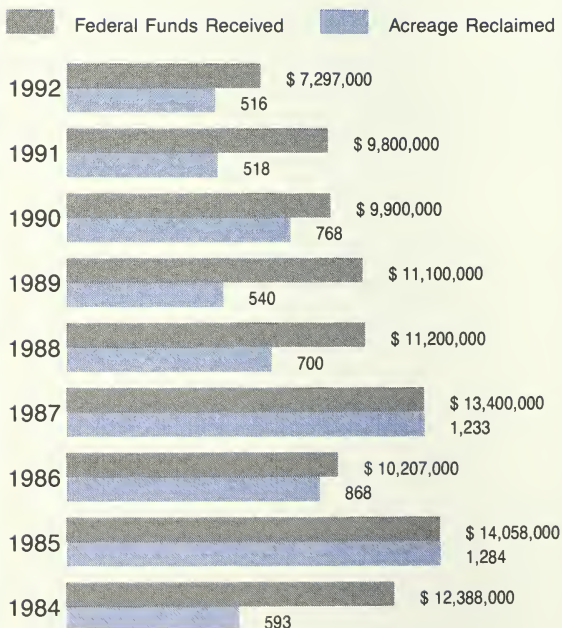
928 South Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704
217/782-0588

In 1975, the Illinois General Assembly established the Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council to address the serious safety hazards and environmental problems posed by abandoned coal mines around the state. These problems typically include:

- open or improperly sealed mine shafts and slope entrances;
- mine gas leaks;
- underground mine and coal refuse fires;
- dilapidated mine buildings and equipment;
- barren, eroding mine spoils and refuse piles;
- hazardous highwalls;
- acid mine drainage, and
- subsidence pits and sags.

The Council consists of Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra, who serves as chairman, and the directors of seven state agencies concerned with restoration of abandoned mines. An executive director and staff design and manage the reclamation projects.

Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council



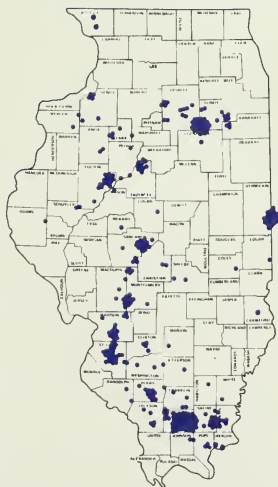
Authority and Funding

The Council operates under the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of

1977. This act, administered by the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), established national reclamation standards for active coal mining and an Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program to address problems on land mined prior to passage of the act. Under the AML program, reclamation work may be eligible for funding if a mine site contains serious safety or environmental problems and was abandoned prior to August 3, 1977. Sites affected after this date may also qualify if regulatory program performance bonds prove to be insufficient or unavailable due to insolvency on the part of the bonding company. Hazardous non-coal (lead, zinc, fluorspar, etc.) are also eligible under certain conditions.

Funding for the reclamation program is provided by a special production fee on active coal mining. The OSMRE collects these fees on a per ton basis and returns the money to the state in the form of reclamation grants.

Locations of Reclaimed Mines



As indicated on this map, the council has reclaimed hundreds of abandoned mines since its establishment in 1975.

Program Guidelines

Reclamation Priority: Federal law requires sites to be reclaimed in a specific sequence with some sites taking precedence regardless of application dates. Sites that pose a threat to public health or safety, such as open shafts or gas leaks, receive top funding priority.

Project Construction: Reclamation projects are designed by Council staff or by qualified engineering consultants. Construction is performed by independent contractors selected through a bidding process. The Council contracts directly with all consultants and contractors. Landowners are neither responsible for any costs, nor do they receive any direct compensation from the Council.

Management: After reclamation, sites or portions of sites often remain sensitive and can be easily damaged. While the safety hazards or environmental problems will have been abated, total restoration is usually too costly or impossible to accomplish. Reclaimed sites are well-suited for wildlife habitat, recreational use, hay production, open space, and, in limited cases, pasture.

Council staff will recommend land uses prior to beginning a reclamation project. Once the project is completed and the site is revegetated, the landowner becomes responsible for managing and protecting the property.

Emergencies

When abandoned mine-related problems occur suddenly, are life-threatening, and require immediate attention, the Council can respond with emergency assistance. Emergencies typically associated with abandoned mines include:

- structures in danger of collapse due to mine subsidence;
- subsidence pits that develop in urban areas or near homes;
- methane gas leaks; and
- mine refuse fires.

In the event of an emergency, the Council can be reached at 618/692-3197 or 217/782-0588. If the situation requires immediate attention after business hours, contact the Illinois Emergency Management Agency at 800/782-7860.

This brochure was funded through a grant from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE). The statements herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the OSMRE.